

Young People's Societies

CHRISTIAN GRACES.

Topic for Sunday, May 8: The Christian Graces. 1 Peter 4:7-11; Colossians 4:6.

DAILY READINGS.

Monday: Forgiveness. Colossians 3:12, 13; Matthew 6:14. Tuesday: Purity. Matthew 5:8; 1 John 3:1-3.

Wednesday: Meekness. Matthew 5:3, 5, 9; Numbers 12:3.

Thursday: Hospitality. Hebrews 13:1-3; 3 John 5:8.

Friday: Godliness. Titus 2:11-14.

Saturday: Love. 1 Corinthians 13; Colossians 3:14.

Grace and graces should be distinguished. Grace is the cause; graces are the effect. Grace is the fountain; graces are the stream.

It is because God hath loved us that we are able to bring forth the fruits of righteousness in those manifestations which the redeemed soul can show.

Graciousness is impossible, except in merely simulated form, without grace. Back of the outward show must lie the inward force of principle from which it comes.

Faith, repentance, obedience, love are Christian graces, born of grace. They are the foundation graces of the Christian character. They are the essentials indispensable.

Humility, patience, forbearance, forgiveness, gentleness, thoughtfulness, tact, meekness, charity, purity, simplicity, unselfishness, come in the happy group and add their charm to the quartet which precedes them.

As the grace of Christ is the source of the graces of the Christian, so the life of Christ is their pattern and example. "I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you." "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."

Among the Christian graces are some which are not so commonly recognized, but which, like all the others, help to make the wheels go more smoothly. They are quietness, sobriety, gentle speaking, hospitality, appreciation. The power of these is not the less because they are not noisy or demonstrative.

Cheerfulness is another beautiful Christian grace. It gives a delightful glow to everything it comes in contact with. It warms its possessor and all who witness it into new life and activity. It drives away approaching clouds, clears the atmosphere, nerves the heart to courage, gives a sparkle to the eye and a ring to the voice.

The most graceless thing one can do is to harp upon one's graces. The latter are possessions to be recognized not by the proclamation of them, but by their manifestation in the life. Men will not believe them to exist at all where they are boasted of, and will largely discount them when attention is called to them.

When the Christian graces cost nothing, and are to be had for the simple asking, that one who does not possess them is without excuse. He is like a man walking penniless through the world, when the whole treasure house of the richest mint is open to his unlimited drafts. Poverty hardly expresses the condition of such a man. He is more than poor. He is foolish.

The beauty of these Christian graces is that they do much to win others for Christ. Where the words fail, they have force. Sometimes, where even our prayers seem to be without avail, some almost unrecognized or unthought-of act or attention moves the most obdurate heart, and, to our surprise, we are made the means of winning a soul to Christ.

It is natural that this should sometimes be. For "thus are the secrets of the heart made manifest; and so, falling down on his face, he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth." Christian graces are but the light kindled in us by Christ shining out. "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

You may overwhelm an enemy with enmity; you may change him into a friend with love.

Prayer Meeting

THE PROMISE OF THE COMFORTER.

John 14:16.

Week Beginning May 1.

Jesus was soon to leave the little company that had gathered about Him. Their constant association with Him, the instruction, counsel, sympathy and encouragement that they had constantly received from Him, made them more dependent on Him than they even realized, and now, when He announced plainly that He was going away, sorrow filled their hearts. He comforts them by assuring them that He would come again. He fortifies their faith by assuring them that He would be with the Father, and that He and the Father were one. He exhorts them to give expression to their love for Him by keeping His commandments. He makes to them the gracious promise, "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do," and, as a promise that should include all needed blessings, He said: "I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever."

The design of this promise was especially to sustain the apostles under the loss of Christ's presence, but it did not have exclusive reference to them. Their need was two-fold: they needed special gifts as apostles and they needed the gracious gifts suited to all believers. Thus the promise applies to all true believers in all places and at all times.

The word translated Comforter signifies one who is called to one's side, called on for aid; hence, one who is appealed to for help. The Holy Spirit is a helper. Such He was to be to those whom Jesus had helped, and such He will be to all who feel their need of help and will call upon Him.

He is perfectly qualified for this gracious office. He is the third person of the Trinity, and is therefore almighty, infinite in wisdom and love. He is the author and sustainer of spiritual life. He is ever accessible, for He abides with us forever. He is the Spirit of Christ, and by Him Christ lives in us.

In His special work in behalf of the apostles He brought to their remembrance the things that Jesus had spoken unto them. He made them infallible in their teaching. He endowed them with courage in facing enemies, boldness of speech in preaching Christ, fortitude under persecution and zeal in extending their Master's Kingdom. He gave them miraculous power to confirm their teaching and attest their authority, and He attended their preaching with divine energy, so as to make it effectual to the conviction and conversion of many who heard.

To all believers He is the Paraclete, or helper. By Him we are given enlightened knowledge of the truth. He imparts life to us and nourishes that life. He enables us to see the reality and beauty of gospel truth. He brings to our remembrance gospel principles and so acts as our counselor. He nourishes within our hearts faith, hope, love and every Christian principle. He qualifies for discharging every duty and rendering every service. He fits us for all the relationships of life which, in His providence, we sustain. He buoys us up under discouragement and trial.

This last is the special ministry of which our Lord spoke in this text. It was the assurance which was most needed at this time, hence our translators used the word "Comforter." All believers who are tempted, or suffer trial or affliction, need this same assurance.

How is this comfort administered? The Divine Spirit comforts by assuring us of our Father's love and shedding abroad that love in our hearts. He comforts by taking the things of Christ and showing them unto us, enabling our dull understandings and sluggish hearts to perceive the surpassing beauty of Christ's character and the unspeakable excellence of His redeeming work. He comforts by revealing the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory that is to be wrought out for us through the medium of the trials that we trustfully endure. He comforts by enabling us to know that we are more than conquerors through Christ Who loved us. He comforts by